

NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE MARICOPA COUNTY ATTORNEY

RICHARD M. ROMLEY



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Joanne Talazus, a former elementary school principal, was sentenced today to 2-years of supervised probation and 300 hours of community service to be focused in the area of adult literacy.

Between October 1, 1998 and December 31, 1998, while she was serving as the Principal at Longview Elementary, Talazus allowed Ronald Ruelas access to children, after being informed he was engaging in inappropriate and illegal contact and conduct with school students. Under Arizona law Talazus had a duty to report the information to Child Protective Services. Instead she decided that there was nothing to the allegations and therefor did not report. Mr. Ruelas was convicted by a jury in a separate trial on multiple counts, including molestation of a child.

“This is a significant sentencing that I hope sends a message to everyone in a position of trust,” said County Attorney Richard Romley. “The responsibilities that go with caring for children are too important and there are consequences when those duties are either shirked or ignored in the name of friendship.”

Talazus pled guilty to one count of failure to report non-accidental injuries and physical neglect of minors, a class 1 misdemeanor. She faced up to 6-months in jail with no agreements between the parties other than her agreement to surrender her Arizona Teaching Certificate.